



# UPPER SHORE Regional Council

## EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

### Chestertown Visitors Center and Virtual

September 20, 2023

Council Members in Attendance: Bob Meffley (Treasurer) Cecil County Councilman

Virtual Attendance: Jackie Gregory (1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair) Cecil County Councilwoman  
Chris Corchiarino (Secretary) Q.A.'s County Commissioner

Partners & Guests: Todd Mohn, Administrator, Queen Anne's County (virtual) proxy for Jack Wilson  
Jamie Williams, Director, Kent County Office of Economic Development (in person) proxy for Albert Nickerson

Staff: Susan O'Neill, USRC Executive Director  
Janice Palmer, USRC Executive Assistant  
Maureen O'Shea Fitzgerald, Grant Program Manager

### **I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

First Vice Chair Jackie Gregory was asked to chair the meeting, and welcomed everyone, opening the meeting at 4:11 pm. Each board member received a packet containing the Meeting Agenda, June 28, 2023, Closed Executive Board Meeting Minutes, Financial Report and Staff Report.

### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A.** Councilwoman Jackie Gregory requested a motion to approve the June 28, 2023, Closed Executive Board Meeting Minutes. Bob Meffley motioned approval. Chris Corchiarino provided a second. All were in favor.

### **III. TREASURE'S REPORT**

Director Susan O'Neill summarized the Financial Report and asked for any questions. Jamie Williams provided a motion to accept the Financial Report as presented. Bob Meffley provided a second. All were in favor.

### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. Business Mentoring Program**

Jamie Williams provided updates on the disbandment of the local SCORE chapter and the desire of the local volunteers to continue mentoring local small businesses. The Upper Shore Offices of Economic Development Directors, along with USRC are working together to create a regional Business Mentoring Program funded through the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund. Maureen O'Shea Fitzgerald has published a page on the USRC website, created rack cards and finalized business agreements. Mentor leaders brought the need for liability insurance to the USRC.

#### **B. LGIT**

A meeting with USRC's lawyer, Thomas Yeager regarding liability insurance for the Business Mentors resulted in the advice that USRC should have liability insurance regardless of the Business Mentoring Program. Mr. Yeager suggested that USRC reach out to LEGIT's HR representative Matt Peters. Susan and Matt have a meeting scheduled for tomorrow, September 21, 2023.

Both Shelley Heller and Chris Corchiarino serve on the board of LEGIT.

#### **C. Upper Shore Food Council**

Susan O'Neill reported that Mike Tielke, Executive Director of the Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center would like to launch an Upper Shore Food Council, a council to plan and prepare for food policy on the upper shore. Mike has reached out to Maureen to be part of the planning committee.

### **V. OLD BUSINESS**

#### **A. Whittsitt Center Discussion**

Susan O'Neill reached out to her MidShore Regional Council colleague Scott Warner asking him to reach out to his county representatives in hopes of coordinating a meeting between Upper Shore and Mid Shore elected officials to discuss plans for the Whittsitt Center. Todd Mohn recognized that this request is outside of USRC's wheelhouse and reported that he has contacted 11<sup>th</sup> House Solutions, a local facilitator who will take over the coordination of meetings and moving the preliminary planning forward. Todd also reported that Bill Webb, Health Officer for Kent County has begun the procurement process for the HVAC infrastructure improvements of the Center. A committee should be formed to develop the plans for wrap around services for youth at the Whittsitt and Carter Center Campus.

#### **B. CTE Scholarship Update**

Janice Palmer reported that she has met with Tom Porter, Coordinator for Accountability and Career and Technical Education at Kent County Public Schools

as well as Adam Tolley, Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction, CTE, and Career Coaches Karen Henson and Betsy Ricketts to discuss parameters and procedures of the CTE Equipment Scholarship. In a continued effort to streamline the process and verify the requests, the Q.A.'s Career Coaches agreed to provide and distribute a shopping list for Queen Anne's Students. USRC has received 38 applications as of September 20, 2023.

**C. Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund**

Maureen O'Shea Fitzgerald reported that all but two MOU's have been executed. All county projects are underway and all four regional projects are moving forward. A meeting regarding a CTE Liaison has been scheduled, a draft RFP for a marketing consultant has been written, and a third quarter report link will be sent via email tomorrow in preparation for a 2nd quarter report to Commerce.

**D. 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Full Council Meeting**

USRC will host a Full Council Breakfast Meeting at the Chester River Yacht Club on Wednesday, October 11, 2023. USRC will be recognized for its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Please RSVP if you haven't already.

**VI. UPDATES**

**A. Staff Report**

Susan asked if there were any questions regarding the staff reports. There were none.

**B. County Updates**

**Cecil** Councilwoman Jackie Gregory reported that Cecil County received a AA+ bond rating, an upgrade from years past.

**Q.A.'s** Commissioner Chris Corchiarino reported that Q.A.'s is working with the state in a new Beach to Bridge Pilot program in an effort to keep traffic moving smoothly as well as prevent grid lock on local roads. Several off ramps have been, and will be closed, over the next few weekends to see if it alleviates the gridlock on local roads. Queen Anne's is trying to educate the public on the Pilot program to try to get ahead of complaints.

**Q.A.'s** Administrator Todd Mohn reported on plans for a new Tech Building at Chesapeake College. This will be an \$80 million project benefiting 5 Counties and CTE students. Each of the counties will be asked to support the funding.

**Kent** OED Director, Jamie Williams, acknowledged that the funding request for the new Tech Building, along with the financial impact of the Blueprint will be challenging for Kent County.

Jamie also reported that she has been asked to implement a Housing Study in Kent County and is working with both the County and Chestertown to narrow the data focus in an effort to understand the affordability and availability of housing. She is leaving the social data to the Social Services Department to analyze.

Jamie is also working with the Comptroller's Office on behalf of local hotels and bed & breakfasts to rectify the 24 county & municipalities tax allocation/collection of Short-Term Rental Taxes. Each jurisdiction is different, not all are enforced.

**Cecil** Councilman Bob Meffley reported that two new turf fields have had ribbon cuttings this fall season. He also reports that the Cecil County Public Schools would like to meet with the Cecil Council to continue discussions on the implementation of the Blueprint. Bob reports that the Cecil County School of Technology is at capacity and that planning should begin to make the school a full-time school.

Bob also reports that the county is completing the last leg of public water & sewer connections from North East to Elkton. And lastly, the Transportation Department has contracted with Great Wolf Lodge to help local employees get to and from work.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further discussion, Jackie Gregory requested a motion for adjournment. Bob Meffley provided a motion, and Chris Corchiarino provided a second. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janice Palmer  
USRC Executive Assistant